

PRESS RELEASE: for immediate release**‘POP DOWN’ MUSHROOM GARDEN BENEATH OXFORD STREET WINS HIGH LINE FOR LONDON IDEAS COMPETITION**

‘Pop Down’ by Fletcher Priest Architects has been selected as the winner of a competition to find new ideas for green space in the capital. The idea, which imagines the transformation of the disused ‘Mail Rail’ tunnel under Oxford Street into an urban mushroom garden lit at street level by sculptural glass-fibre mushrooms, was chosen from 170 designs submitted to the open ideas competition launched by the Landscape Institute in partnership with the Mayor of London and Garden Museum in July.

The judging panel, which included Joshua David and Robert Hammond, co-founders of New York’s High Line, Dr Penelope Curtis, Director of Tate Britain, Mark Brearley, Head of Design for London, and leading landscape architects Kim Wilkie and Jo Gibbons were so impressed by the quality of shortlisted ideas that they not only selected a runner-up but nominated three highly commended designs.

Runner-up:

The Lido Line by [Y/N] Studio. An idea to insert a clean, safe ‘basin’ in the Regent’s Canal in which to swim the ‘Lido Line’ from Little Venice to Limehouse.

Highly commended:

Bridge-It by HTA. An idea to unlock inaccessible transport corridors around the existing transport network – green linear parks built over, under and beside railway lines, opening up cycling and walking networks.

Barge Walk by Erika Richmond and Peggy Pei-Chi Chi. A design to re-connect people with water via the creation of a linear park, farm and wetland on floating barges at the edge of Canary Wharf.

Bus Roots by Wynne James. An idea to make use of the many empty roof spaces of bus shelters to create raised gardens with sparrow colonies, insect hotels and miniature wildflower meadows. Each bus shelter garden would be looked after by its local community, school or street.

Speaking about the competition and winning design the judges said:

“Between the ‘Pop Down’ and ‘Lido Line’ proposals and the three highly commended entries, the competition puts forward a group of creative ideas that are in some cases fantastic, in others realistic. They all have the power to help us look at London and green infrastructure in innovative and unexpected ways.”

Joshua David, co-founder, Friends of the High Line

“The winner and runner-up have this strong linear nature connecting neighbourhoods and the city. Whether or not they are ever realised they help people to see the city in a different light.”

Robert Hammond, co-founder, Friends of the High Line

“The response to this competition shows how many ideas are just waiting to happen, on, over or under the streets of London”

Dr Penelope Curtis, Director Tate Britain

“During this Olympic summer it was clear that London’s public spaces are coming alive as never before. There is now a popular appetite for making our outdoors more useable and more wonderful. This competition has revealed how much talent and how many good ideas we have at our disposal as we work together to make a great outdoors.”

Mark Brearley, Head of Design for London, Greater London Authority

“The breadth of great ideas shows the huge interest in making our cities more liveable, and ‘Pop Down’ captures the imagination as does the ‘Lido Line’ in transforming an attitude to the critical value of green infrastructure.”

Jo Gibbons, FLI, Director of J & L Gibbons Landscape Architects

“A competition that has stimulated some free-spirited ideas for making connections across London”

Kim Wilkie, CMLI, Principal, Kim Wilkie Associates Landscape Architects

The competition:

Inspired by the success of New York’s High Line, an urban park which has transcended the commonly accepted role of an urban park, the competition has generated designs that range from massive city-wide strategies to small-scale community projects. The locations selected span the whole of the city, and include the West End, Blackfriars, Shoreditch High Street, a stretch of the A20 in south London and the ‘Square Mile’. Several themes appear to dominate the shortlisted designs: the significance of journeys, links and transport infrastructure and how they impact on our lives - and the power of water - whether it’s the Thames or some of London’s forgotten waterways or issues like water scarcity, flooding and pollution, many of the designs make use of water in their designs.

The shortlisted designs will be on display at the Garden Museum until the 21st October. An online gallery of the shortlist is viewable at <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/events/competitions/highline.php>

The other shortlisted design:

- **Green Arteries** by Bell Phillips Architects, Spacehub and Aecom. A scheme to transform London’s flyovers into productive and beautiful green arteries to reduce the heat effect and traffic noise and encourage biodiversity.

- **Green Lung Retrofit** by Jerry Tate Architects. Transform Tower 42 into a tower of green. Wrap ‘green jackets’ around the City’s offices to cool excess heat.
- **[Re]Structure** by Scott Badham and Ian Fisher. Biocentric ‘mats’ and ‘sleeves’ to be layered onto buses, trams and trains to create mobile gardens.
- **A Green North Bank** by Yue Rao and Chuanwen Yu. The creation of a new linear park from Blackfriars Bridge to Lambeth Bridge.
- **Street Orchard** by Laura Rowland and Claire Beard. Create miniature orchards around existing bus shelters to become shared cultivation areas. Insulated beehives placed within the trees and sloped sedum roof would catch falling fruit and collect rainwater.
- **Grow Box** by Atkins Landscape Architects. A do-it-yourself green infrastructure toolbox containing product and professional advice vouchers to empower local community groups to improve their local playgrounds, parks and allotments. A small-scale initiative aimed at improving green infrastructure in London one small step at a time.
- **The New River** by Place Design + Planning. Breathing new life into a forgotten waterway and collecting fresh water at source in Stoke Newington.
- **Retracing London’s Drovers’ Road** by Howard Miller and Rowena May. Revitalising the ancient route used to move livestock from pasture to market between Hackney and Bishopsgate, includes rowan trees and new ‘slow landscape’ areas.
- **London Parks Library** by Me & Sam Ltd. Establish small book exchanges within London’s many parks and green spaces. A record card inside each book would tell the story of the invisible network and movement of book and people through London’s parks.
- **Lea Valley Rain Farm** by Andres Briones. Create a ‘rain farm’ in the Lea Valley to store run-off and rainwater to serve the local neighbourhood.
- **High, Low, Fast and Fluid Lines** by Terra Studio. A series of four green infrastructure schemes: a fast commuter cycleway on raised railway viaducts, ‘air rail’ gardens beside railway sidings, a new iconic green bridge over Blackfriars Bridge and a floating flower show on static pontoons on the River.
- **Roots for the Future** by Hassell, We Made That and AOC. A network of ‘indus-tree-ous’ miniature woodlands planted in London’s left-over spaces (parking lots, derelict land).
- **Fleet River Channel** by Richard Reynolds. Re-instate the shallow stream of the Fleet, one of London’s lost waterways, in a cutting one storey beneath street level at Blackfriars.
- **Suburban Kiss** by Ireland Albrecht Landscape Architects. Transform London’s arterial routes into new green spaces linking the Green Belt to the city. Road verges and pavements become multi-functional landscapes for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Old Street Green** by Mailen Design. Transform the traffic roundabout above Old Street Underground station into a new garden to connect the underground space with the exterior street space.

-ENDS-

All press enquiries, image and interview requests to Sarah Harrison, for the Landscape Institute, on 07768 372892 or sarah@sarahharrisonpr.com

Notes to Editors:

A High Line for London Competition:

Shortlisting judges:

Ian Houlston CMLI, LDA Design LLP

Robin Buckle, Transport for London

Jamie Dean, Greater London Authority

Meredith Gunderson, independent curator

Judges:

Joshua David and Robert Hammond, founders of the High Line

Dr Penelope Curtis, Director of Tate Britain

Johanna Gibbons, FLI, Director of J & L Gibbons, Landscape Architects

Kim Wilkie, CMLI, Principal, Kim Wilkie Associates, Landscape Architects

Mark Brearley, Head of Design, Greater London Authority

The Landscape Institute (LI) is the royal chartered body for landscape architects. It represents professionals in the UK working across planning, design and the management of urban and rural landscape. The LI campaigns to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for public benefit and is part of the government's Green Infrastructure Partnership. The Landscape Institute publishes a range of materials explaining the benefits of green infrastructure – visit www.landscapeinstitute.org/gi

The Garden Museum is Britain's only museum dedicated to gardening and garden design. It was founded by John and Rosemary Nicholson in 1977 in the churchyard of St Mary-at-Lambeth following the rediscovery of the tomb of the 17th century plant hunters the John Tradescants. In November 2008 the museum re-opened following a re-design by the architects Dow Jones. The newly designed interior includes individual spaces for exhibitions, the permanent collection, education, café and shop. Three exhibitions each year explore varying aspects of British gardening, and a programme of over 40 talks and interviews celebrates heroes and heroines from the forgotten plant-hunters and gardeners of the past to the designers and writers in fashion today. Visitors will also see a permanent display of paintings, tools, ephemera and historic artefacts: a glimpse into the uniquely British love affair with gardens. Visit www.gardenmuseum.org.uk

The High Line is a public park built on an historic freight rail line elevated above the streets on Manhattan's West Side. It is owned by the City of New York, and maintained and operated by Friends of the High Line. Founded in 1999 by community residents, Friends of the High Line fought for the High Line's preservation and transformation at a time when the historic structure was under the threat of demolition. It is now the job of the non-profit conservancy working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to make sure the High Line is maintained as an extraordinary public space for all visitors to enjoy. In addition to overseeing maintenance, operations, and public programming for the park, Friends of the High Line works to raise the essential private funds to support more than 90 percent of the park's annual operating budget, and to advocate for the preservation and transformation of the [High Line at the Rail Yards](#), the third and final section of the historic structure, which runs between West 30th and West 34th Streets.

The High Line is located on Manhattan's West Side. It runs from Gansevoort Street in the Meatpacking District to West 34th Street, between 10th & 11th Avenues. The first section of the High Line opened on June 9, 2009. It runs from Gansevoort Street to West 20th Street. The second section, which runs between West 20th and West 30th Streets, opened June 8, 2011. www.thehighline.org